

cultivated eucalypts, together with other shrubs; these added much interest to the display.

Wildflowers sent from Perth included *Amigozanthos manglesi*, *Leschenaultia biloba*, *Conospermum*, *Verticordia* and *Grevillea* species; as usual, they were a most popular feature.

The annual Hall's Gap exhibition has undoubted educational value, if only to afford people an opportunity of admiring and learning the names of native flowers which they would never otherwise see. Criticism is often levelled at the picking of flowers for this purpose, but I would like to defend this show on the following grounds:

1. Permits are issued by the Forests Commission for all exhibits obtained on Crown Lands.
2. Some of the flowers are collected from private property.
3. Most flowers are collected far away from tourist tracks and roads.
4. Those authorized to collect are responsible people in Hall's Gap who fully appreciate what their wildflowers mean to the district.
5. Judicious picking of flowers can prove beneficial to the plant by acting as a pruning.

Mr. R. Mair, Forester at Hall's Gap, has been most co-operative, advising not only the location of many species but where the best flowers may be obtained at a particular time.

When the proposed new building at Hall's Gap increases the facilities for staging, it is safe to predict that this annual exhibition of wildflowers will rank among the very best in the Commonwealth.

LABILLARDIÈRE'S PLANT NAMES

By THOMAS S. HART

Labillardière, the distinguished botanist of the expedition under D'Entrecasteaux, in search of La Perouse, wrote an account of the voyage, published in 1799, and a botanical work in Latin, *Novae Hollandiae Plantarum Specimen* (1804-6). Both are available at the Melbourne Public Library, the "Voyage" in the English edition of 1802 as well as the original French.

In the Latin work he regularly explains new generic names and gives reasons for them, the Greek roots used for most of the names being interpreted by Latin equivalents, but many of the words in both languages are quite familiar to us.

For the smaller number of names given originally in the "Voyage" we find his meaning in the context, more or less explicitly stated in narrative form. As a few were rather puzzling, a study of his method of forming names was undertaken with some results of considerable interest.

1. It appears at once that his names are mostly smooth-running words of three or four or occasionally five syllables quite usable as vernaculars if needed, even the longer ones presenting no difficulty in pronunciation.

2. Most of the names are formed from Greek words, usually of two such words combined.

3. The characters of the plant on which the names are based are well-chosen features. A name, of course, is not a description, but a reminder of some leading point.

4. The Greek roots are also well-chosen with attention to some fine distinctions of meaning.

5. Euphony is treated as important; hence the ordinary usages in forming compound words are often not adhered to. Letters may be omitted, softened or even added to get a neat name.

6. As a Frenchman he has less use for some groups of letters which we use; *th* is not different from *t*, and *st*; and especially *str*, are much less frequent in French than in English.

The well-known *Calyx* illustrates his method—*Calyx*, or cup, used in its botanical sense, and *trich* or *thrix*, a single hair or bristle explained as Latin *seta*. He could not have well chosen a more suitable feature than this bristle or single hair on the end of the calyx lobes. The word *calyx* really has a second *k* sound in the *x* and *trix* is not exactly either Greek form of the word, but a short and euphonic form is attained. *Calyx-o-thrix*, used by Mueller and earlier, is what would be called more correct by usual methods, but it is worth noting that Mueller still calls it by Labillardière's name.

But *comè* in *Comesperma* is hair collectively, hair of the head, referring to the hairs on the seed, and yet another is used in *Atherosperma*, after the beard of barley, or barbs of a spear, referring to the plumose awns of the fruitlets. He knows, of course, that these matured carpels are really fruitlets but he acknowledges a popular usage by inserting "seeds if they wish".

Atherosperma, our *Sassafras*, is correct in form by usual rules, but the name is easy and we need not grudge the fine plant a rather more striking name than usual.

Lepidosperma, as it stands, is also formally correct, but he derives it from the adjective *lepidotus*, with scales, and drops the *l*. Incidentally, this is the most characteristic Australian group of sedges, limited to Australia and a few in the islands and south China. The other large sedge genera are of wide distribution.

Of the earlier names in the "Voyage" some are easy enough from the context.

"A fine plant of a new genus very distinct from all that have been so far described. It is an Irid with two stamens. I have given it because of this singularity the name of *Diplarrena*. The affinity with the genus *Moraea* caused me to give it the name *Diplarrena moraea*" (our Butterfly Flag).

Again, "I soon found an evergreen tree of which the nut (*amande*) is after the manner of the cashew nut situated on a fleshy stalk much larger than itself. I have given for this reason to this new genus the name of *Exocarphus*". *Exo* outside, *carpos* fruit. This is the Wild Cherry or Cherry Ballart. There is no mystery about the nature of the fruit and fleshy stalk.

Anigasanthus for the Kangaroo Paw is rather more difficult. The unequal lobes at the end of the tubular perianth are mentioned. Bentham, who rarely explains names in the *Flora Australiensis*, says definitely *anisos* unequal altered for Euphony—no doubt to avoid the repeated *s*.

We may note that Labillardière treats these older names as adequately explained as he does not offer any further explanation in the "specimen".

We then come to *Chorizema*, which was actually the name which started the search. A derivation from *choros* a dance is given as a *conjecture* in Curtis' *Botanical Magazine* 1807, *somia* punishment being suggested for the latter part—"as we suppose from the inconvenience its spinous leaves must occasion to the naked footed dancers of that country". The plant was a prickly-leaved species of this genus. This represents dictionary work with the attendant dangers of the method and without due reference to the narrative. The Greek has distinct letters for the short *o* and the long *o*, and the long *o* is at the end of the alphabet well separated from the other and liable to be overlooked.

The derivation from *choros*—a dance is given also by Don 1832 but the latter part of the name altered to *sema*—a drink. On the previous day after some search they had found usable water in small amount, of no use for the ship's shortage, but ample for their evening meal. Next day, they found many plants including *chorizema*, a pea with separate stamens. The narrative clearly fits *chorizo*—I separate—and *nema*—filament of the stamen, the *n* elected for euphony and shortening the name. This treatment of the name is fully supported by Labillardière's *Campynema*, explicitly given in the

ng'o" (w)

"specimen" from *Campylas*—curved, and *nema*—filament of the stamen, the *l* being dropped out. But *chorizema* also agrees with Labillardière's use of well-chosen features. The *Podalyria* section of the Pea Family has this feature of free filaments. *Podalyria* itself, and a very few other genera, are South African, there are a few in America but only one species of this section in Europe. Three-quarters of this section are Australian including several important genera and this plant was the first of this group found by Labillardière. With most local observers following Bentham and Mueller the group is very well known.

Murray's Dictionary gives *Chorizema* pronounced with the *o* long and derived from *Choriza*. The difference in pronunciation at once sorts out the words related to *Choros*. The correct derivation is not a fresh discovery.

As Mr. Robinson of Dutton remarked in a former discussion, "It is a good plant and a good name," and it is none the worse for knowing the author's ability in making good names.

NATURALISTS' NOTEBOOK

[Reserved for your notes, observations and queries]

COOTS IN GIPPSLAND LAKES

During 1952 two major floods—in June and December—occurred in the river-system which flows into the Gippsland Lakes. As a result, the waters of the lakes remained in a comparatively fresh condition over a period of from 8 to 9 months. This has been followed by the reappearance of extensive weed-beds in parts of the lakes where marine growth has been absent for many years past. This change has, in turn, brought to the lakes area countless numbers of Coots (*Fulica atra*), which obviously are finding in the weed-beds an abundance of food. Many Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) have also, at times, been observed. Although Coots have always been more or less plentiful in the lagoons and morasses adjacent to the rivers, I have no previous record of their occurrence in such numbers in the open lakes.

These changes should be of particular interest to marine-biologists and others who have been appointed to investigate the effects of increasing salinity in the waters of the Gippsland Lakes in relation to changes in marine and marginal growth, erosion, etc.

—FRED. C. W. BARTON.

CATERPILLAR CULPRITS

[From *The Countryman*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1950]

Gardeners already have no cause to love the large cabbage white butterflies, which swarm across the continent each spring. It is their caterpillars, of course, which devour our green vegetables later in the year. Now it seems that poultry keepers, too, have a case against them. The latest "Report on Animal Health Services" (H.M.S.O., 1/6) records several outbreaks of a disease of ducklings which produced a sudden high mortality, and they were all among birds that had had access to caterpillar-infested greens. In every case investigated, the caterpillar of the large white butterfly was involved, and its poisonous nature was confirmed by experimental feeding. Fowls are less susceptible, but, when next the cabbages are being eaten by caterpillars, do not risk turning poultry on to them."

—Submitted by J. W. Raff.